

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 01500

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, EI, UK
SUBJECT: MASON VISIT TO DUBLIN

1. NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON VISITED DUBLIN MAY 5 FOR THE SOMEWHAT DELAYED "ROUTINE" TALKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND WITH IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER O'KENNEDY. DISCUSSION HEADS WERE SECURITY, ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AND THE GENERAL POLITICAL PICTURE. ALTHOUGH BOTH JOINT AND INDIVIDUAL PRESS CONFERENCES GAVE AN IMPRESSION OF GENERAL

AGREEMENT OR GENIAL RECOGNITION OF AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT, IN FACT THE MEETING HAD ITS MOMENTS OF ACTIVE AND INTENSE

DISAGGQEMENT IN A NUMBER OF AREAS ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTRY NORTHERN IRELAND EXPERT SEAN DONLON. THESE DISAGREEMENTS HAVE GOTTEN SOME PLAY IN THE IRISH NEWS-PAPERS.

2. DONLON'S COMMENTS WERE INTERSPERSED IN A LUNCHEON GIVEN AT THE EMBASSY FOR VISITING NORTHERN EUROPEAN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR WOODS WHERE VARIOUS SUBJECTS WERE DISCUSSED. DONLON MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS ON THE MASON
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VISIT: (A) THE IRISH WERE NOT HAPPY WITH MASON'S GENERAL ATTITUDE. EITHER "OUT OF DESIGN OR SHEER IGNORANCE" HE CONSISTENTLY MISINTERPRETED THE GOI POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND. (B) MASON SEEMED CONVINCED THAT LYNCH'S POLICY IS A RATHER FLWK DEMAND FOR A BRITISH "DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW AT A PARTICULAR TIME," WHICH DONLON DESCRIBED AS THE AN PHOBLACT (PROVO NEWS-

LE55ER) POSITION RATHER THAN EVEN CLOSE TO THE GOI POSITION. THE IRISH, HE SAID, GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT MASON HAS PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN PROPAGANDA MIXED IN HIS MIND WITH GOI POLICY. (C) MASON WAS ORIGINALLY HARD-NOSED ON SECURITY COOPERATION AND INSISTED THAT MANY IF NOT MOST SECURITY PROBLEMS IN NORTHERN IRELAND WERE BASED ON SUPPORT FROM THE REPUBLIC, BUT BACKED OFF WHEN O'KENNEDY STARTED QUOTING FACTS, ASKING FOR EVIDENCE, AND OFFERING TO GO PUBLIC ON ANY AND ALL ALLEGATIONS. DONLON COMMENTED IN AN ASIDE THAT THE GOI HAS NO INCLINATION TO BE A SCAPEGOAT. (D) MASON "MORE-OR-LESS" ADMITTED THAT ALL POLITICAL MOVEMENT FOR DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT OR "NATIONALIST/LOYALIST" COOPERATION IS DEAD FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, AND DID NOT SEEM MUCH INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING POLITICAL PROBLEMS OR SOLUTIONS. (E) BOTH SIDES ARE PUTTING A GOOD PUBLIC FACE ON IT BUT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS AND IRISH HOPES FOR SOME MOVE OUT OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND IMPASSE WERE NOT ADVANCED BY THESE TALKS.

3. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE AND SEPARATE PRESS CONFERENCE ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH "IN THE SEARCH FOR LONG-TERM LASTING STABILITY IN THE NORTH," BUT STRESSED THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO MAKE POLITICAL PROGRESS AND ENCOURAGE THE PARTIES TO MOVE TOWARD DEVOLU-

TION WITH PARTNERSHIP -- PROVIDED THE NORTHERN PARTIES
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ACCEPTED IT. THE TWO SIDES ALSO ANNOUNCED ENDORSEMENT OF VARIOUS ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROJECTS. ON SECURITY THEY JOINTLY "NOTED WITH SATISFACTION" THE CONSTANTLY DEVELOPING POLICE COOPERATION AND REVEALED THAT THE TWO TOP POLICEMEN (MCLAUGHLIN AND NEWMAN) FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER WOULD MEET SOON. SHANNON

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